U.S. Attorney, Pennsylvania, Western press release, 2026-11-02
Source: https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdpa/pr/pittsburgh-financial-advisor-pleads-guilty-falsely-impersonating-department-labor

Pittsburgh Financial Advisor Pleads Guilty to Falsely Impersonating Department of Labor Employee

PITTSBURGH, Pa. – A resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, pleaded guilty in federal court to one count of false impersonation of a federal officer or employee, United States Attorney Troy Rivetti announced today.

Lazaven Mitchell, 38, pleaded guilty before Senior United States District Judge David Stewart Cercone.

In connection with the guilty plea, the Court was advised that Mitchell is a Pittsburgh-based licensed financial advisor and loan officer who, on multiple occasions between April 2024 and June 2024, presented himself to local businesses as working for the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA). Mitchell would contact Pittsburgh businesses, identify himself as working for EBSA, and request to review the businesses' retirement plans to determine whether they were in compliance with authorities governing retirement plans.

After reviewing a retirement plan, Mitchell would identify a compliance issue and then recommend that the business terminate its current advisor and transfer the plan to him to serve as the plan administrator, including providing the business owner with a draft letter for their signature that would terminate the old plan advisor. To effectuate this, Mitchell would send a letter to the business bearing the Department of Labor seal and EBSA mailing address in Washington D.C. In text messages between Mitchell and one business owner, Mitchell referenced having "a final determination from the DOL," and to coming to the business to retrieve "the documents for the Department of Labor inquiry." In a text to a different business owner, Mitchell sent a fictitious business card bearing the EBSA's name and crest, his name with the title of "Employee Benefit Advisor," and an address for a suite within the William S. Moorhead Federal Building.

Judge Cercone scheduled sentencing for March 25, 2027. The law provides for a total maximum sentence of up to three years in prison, a fine of up to the greater of $250,000 or twice the gross pecuniary gain to Mitchell, or both. Under the federal

Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed is based upon the seriousness of the offense and the prior criminal history, if any, of the defendant.

Assistant United States Attorney Brendan J. McKenna is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General conducted the investigation that led to the prosecution of Mitchell.